Mr. John Wilkins

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To the INHABITANTS of the WESTERN COUNTRY, by HUGH HENRY BRACKENRIDGE.

HAVING returned from a ſervice of two ſeſſions, I take the earlieſt opportunity to ſtate to you the late tranſactions of the government, at leaſt ſo far as they reſpect the Weſtern Country. But ſhall, in the firſt place, take ſome notice of a publication by William Findley, in which he holds me up in an unfavorable point of view. It was publiſhed in my abſence, and was what I had not expected from a compeer. *Accuſe not thy fellow ſervant; to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth.* It is true ſome altercation had taken place between that member and myſelf in the houſe, in which he was, in a moſt illiberal manner, the agreſſor. This was in the debate on the bank during the firſt ſeſſion. I treated him with great indignity as he deſerved; and I thought it would have ended there. But he brings it before the people and wiſhes to induce them to give him that revenge which he himſelf could not take.---- This he attemnts to do by leading them to believe in the firſt inſtance, that I had inſulted them. I had called them fools, &c.

The following correſpondence will explain this:

Mr. SMILEY,

SIR,

Mr. Findley has publiſhed, in the Pittſburgh Gazette, the following words, of which he gives you as the author, viz. That with reſpect to my vote on the *receiving certificates*, being aſked, *how I could reconcile my conduct with my profeſſions to my conſtituents?* I replied, *that the people were all fools*, and by putting *a few lines in the newſpapers, I could eaſily reconcile them to my views.*

You will much oblige me, by ſtating preciſely, what you conceive me to have ſaid of this nature, the place where, time when, &c. Your's, &c.

The following is his anſwer:

SIR,

Agreeable to your requeſt, I will ſtate the expreſſions to which Mr. Findley alludes in his publication, which he conſiders diſreſpectful to the people: It was at the houſe of the chief juſtice, Mr. M'Kean, ſome ſhort time after the motion for receiving certificates in payment for lands was negatived by the aſſembly---The chief juſtice and Mr. M'Lane had withdrawn to another room---you, ſir, and Mr. Redick, were ſitting on one ſide of the fire, and young Mr. M'Kean and I, on the other---Major Douglaſs was alſo preſent. Mr. Redick and you were engaged in converſation. It was carried on in a low tone of voice for a conſiderable time---as I was engaged in converſation with Mr. M'Kean, I paid no attention to what paſſed between you and Mr. Redick, till you, in an elevated tone of voice, declaimed againſt what you called the unreaſonable jealouſies of the people,* and declared they were fools, and that they had been always wrong. I felt myſelf hurt; † interferred in the converſation: and replied, with ſome reſentment, that I did not think any man had a right to make ſuch a declaration; and that I had a very different opinion of the underſtandings of the people. You repeated, that they were fools, § and that they were always wrong. I alledged, that the body of the people ſeldom judged wrong, except when miſinformed, and I gave two inſtances to prove, that the people of Pennſylvania had thought and acted right, when their rulers ‖ had tho't and acted wrong.

On my return home with Mr. Redick, he told me, that a part of the converſation between you and him, was on the ſubject of certificates, and that he had aſked you, how you would reconcile your vote with your promiſes ††to the people? you told him, you would write a piece, ‡ and ſend it to the Pittſburgh Gazette, whereby you would convince them that the meaſure would be injurious, as it would have a tendency to raiſe the price of certificates.* If you uſe any part of this, pleaſe to publiſh the whole.

Your humble ſervant,

JOHN SMILEY.

March 9, 1787.

My note to Mr. Redick.

SIR,

I incloſe you my note to Mr. Smiley, and his anſwer: you will pleaſe to ſay what you recollect of the converſation to which he alludes, and what you may have ſaid to him, reſpecting any words uſed by me.

Your's, &c.

SIR,

In anſwer to your note, I recollect ſome part of the converſation at the houſe of the chief juſtice, and remember the words by which Mr. Smiley mentions, viz. *that the people were fools*, but cannot recollect what people, whether the people of the weſtern country, of this city, or of Pennſylvania, but, I believe, it was of the people generally. We had ſpoken of the bank, and I obſerved, that it was thought by ſome, that Mr. Morris had it in view to make an advantage of the bank to himſelf and a few friends, rather than to ſerve the public. You replied, the people were fools; if they would let Mr. Morris alone, he would make Pennſylvania a great people, but they would not ſuffer him to do it.

On Mr. Smiley's interfering you appeared angry with him, as if you thought it improper, and dropped your brows, and ſeemed to wiſh to evade any converſation, and, in fact, did evade it after a few words.

On aſking you in that converſation, or on ſome other occaſion, if you did not think the people of the weſtern country would be diſſatisfied at your not voting in favor of receiving the certifinates? you anſwered, you would ſatisfy the people, by making a ſtatement of the caſe in the Pittſburgh Gazette, when you went home, and this I might have mentioned to Mr. Smiley.

DAVID REDICK.

March 10, 1787.

I think it muſt be evident, that even from the words of Smiley, highly wrought as they are in his favour, § William Findley is not ſupported in his charge againſt me, and it is at leaſt a miſrepreſentation.

But I am accuſed of having ſolicited my ſeat in the legiſlature, and with *not having had ſufficient popularity to have been returned without it.* I offered myſelf it is true, and if I had conceived the people would have thought of me without it, I might not have given myſelf the trouble. Every man has his way of inducing public notice. The firſt time I heard of William Findley was at Port Royal, in this county, from John Emerſon. Do you know, ſaid he, William Findley? No----ſaid I----the name is new to me. I was at a gathering the other day, ſaid he, where he was preſent, and told us a great many ſtories out of hiſtory. He has a great memory. This is ſome man, thought I, canvaſſing for an election. I was not ſurpriſed to hear a ſhort time afterwards, his name announced as a candidate for the council of cenſors. It is immaterial whether we ſucceed in theſe things by the *ſtill ſmall voice* of common talk among the people, or by *means* of an addreſs as I did.

But I promiſed to accompliſh certain objects. I only propoſed certain objects to the public view which in my opinion ought to be accompliſhed. But this was an implied promiſe, that I would endeavour to accompliſh them. Be it ſo; if my propoſing, implied a promiſe to endeavour to accompliſh, that promiſe implied a condition that it ſhould be found conſiſtent with the general good. On taking a ſeat in the houſe, I had conceived myſelf to poſſeſs the power of deliberation, to act as I thought proper. My ſaying this or that previous to the election, could only be a preſumption to the people that I would ſtill ſay the ſame, unleſs I ſhould have good reaſon to change my ſentiment and ſay the contrary. It was no determination which I could not alter, as the conſtituent himſelf, were he preſent, could alter it; for I was in his place. It was no *contract or engagement* as between diſtinct parties, for the conſtituent and the repreſentative politically are the ſame, and have but one intereſt.

If the repreſentative had not a latitude of reflection notwithſtanding every former ſentiment, how could he act conſiſtent with his oath when he takes his ſeat in the houſe. It is preſcribed by the article of the conſtitution, and is as follows:

"I ----- do ſwear (or affirm) that as a member of this aſſembly, I will not propoſe or aſſent to any bill, vote, or reſolution, which ſhall appear to me injurious to the people; nor do or conſent to any act or thing whatever, that ſhall have a tendency to leſſen or abridge their rights and privileges, as declared in the conſtitution of this ſtate; but will in all things conduct myſelf as a faithful honeſt repreſentative and guardian of the people, according to the beſt of my judgment and abilities."

From this oath it muſt appear that a repreſentative is not ſuppoſed to be a mere machine, like a clock wound up, to run ſo many hours in the ſame way; he is ſent to hear from others, & to think himſelf, as well as to vote. All that can be deduced as is already ſaid, from the ſentiments of a candidate, is, that he will not lightly change theſe, or for weak reaſons.

I propoſed a number of points to the people, and this caſe of certificates is the only one with reſpect to which I changed my mind: I have laboured diligently to accompliſh all the reſt: nevertheleſs this was a point with reſpect to which I thought myſelf clear.---- I had two years before, when the land-office was opened, expreſſed to George Woods, eſquire, then a member of aſſembly, this opinion with reſpect to letting in the old location rights in this country, to be patented with certificates, as well as the *ſettlement rights.* I had ſigned a petition about a year ago in hand of William Elliot to this effect: and all is true that William Findley ſays, of my being on the committee in the houſe, and reporting in favor of it. But what then? When I came to hear it argued on the floor and he acknowledged I heard it argued, *I ſtruck to the power of reaſon, and made an attonement for what I had raſhly thought and ſaid, by a deciſion to the contrary.* This ought to be a monument of my love of truth and deſire of juſtice. I am ſure the impreſſion made upon the houſe, at leaſt of all that I think liberal or worth regarding was that of candour and integrity. It was a ſacrifice to truth at the expence of what is painful to a man, the idea that he has before thought wrong. It was a ſacrifice to conſcience and to honor, at the expence of preſent popularity. I knew that I ſhould bring upon myſelf the railing of the intereſted and the uninformed, and both might do me damage. But what I then did, I ſtill approve, and were it a new caſe, I would do it again. This is all the anſwer I ſhall give on this point. But it will be ſaid what were the reaſons againſt the propoſition, which induced you to oppoſe it? This is a fair queſtion, and I ſhall anſwer it. I have before ſuggeſted ſome reaſons why I thought it not the immediate and local intereſt of this country at the *preſent time.* This I ſhall explain more fully by and bye. But I will now ſtate my reaſons againſt the bill in general. The greater part of theſe are contained in an argument I made on a queſtion of poſtponement. This was as follows:

"It may be recollected that when this ſubject was before the houſe in the laſt ſeſſions, I gave my vote with diffidence, not confident what in this caſe might be the intereſt of the ſtate in general, but diſpoſed to believe that it would not be the immediate intereſt of the weſtern country to adopt a propoſition of this nature. However, this affair being again brought before the houſe, I have conſidered it with great attention, and it is decidedly my judgment that the meaſure is unjuſt and impolitic. It is true I thought otherwiſe before I had an opportunity of proper information: for this reaſon I can eaſily excuſe thoſe of my conſtituents who perſiſt in the opinion that it ought to be adopted: they are in the ſame ſituation in which I then was, and it is to be expected they will think as I then did. For this reaſon I could wiſh the bill to be poſtponed until the next ſeſſion, that in the mean time the people whom I repreſent may have an opportunity to evolve the ſubject, and determine leiſurely whether in good conſcience a bill of this nature ought to be paſſed into a law.

I am diſpoſed to believe that it is the voice of the people whom I repreſent that the meaſure be adopted, but it may not be their ſenſe; that is, on due information the judgment of the greater part. If this bill is not poſtponed I ſhall conceive myſelf bound (from

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* What people? The people who were *jealous* I ſuppoſe.

† The obſervation touched Mr. Smiley, he knew himſelf to be one of thoſe *jealous* people.

§ I wiſh there was not too much truth in it, that the bulk of mankind are fools.

‖ I know of no rulers in a republic. The laws rule.

†† I dare ſay Mr. Redick had never conſtrued any thing I had ſaid to be a *promiſe.*

‡ It is impoſſible I could uſe this phraſe; it is vulgar.

* This was a local reaſon, but not my principal objection to the bill.

‡ He muſt ſuppoſe me a raſcal indeed to be capable of doing otherwiſe.

§ Two things are connected by Findley: Smiley alſo wiſhes to bring them together, viz. *that the people were fools*, (God knows what people) and for this reaſon *I would write in the Pittſburgh Gazette.* Every candid perſon muſt ſee the violence of theſe men, when one of them retails a ſentence of a converſation overheard, and the other ſplices it with what had no relation to it.

what I know of the minds of the people)* to vote for it, but could wish to give them an opportunity of more close and precise examination of the question by postponing it. If then it should be their opinion that the measure ought to be adopted, I could more chearfully come forward and support their sentiments.

My objections to this bill are these: *The act is unequal, giving an advantage to some at the expence of others.* Who are they who demand it? The holders of old rights, that is rights prior to 1776---rights of lands by the late proprietors of Pennsylvania: † of these the purchase money still remains due. What became of the quit-rents?* They are sunk in the hands of the holders. Was this the bounty of the state? Doubtless. At her own expence? No, at the expence of the proprietors. But the yeomanry may be said to have won it with their swords. Won, what? Emancipation from all shape of feudal tenure. The quit-rents accumulating for an hundred years are extinguished. It is the sole advantage of the old right holders. Yet, were the holders of these rights the only men who fought our battles? No: there were others, who had paid their quit rents, and to whom nothing remained to be extinguished --Moreover, the mechanic of the city, the labourer of the country, equally fought and have received no bounty of this nature. The twenty hundred artizans and merchants of this city, who met Cornwallis at the fords of Trenton, equally drew their swords, yet not having lands have received no bounty of this nature. Why were not these quit rents on old rights (if it was thought expedient to deprive the proprietors of them) exacted, at least so far up as the revolution, and ordered to be paid into the state treasury, in order to exonerate (*pro-tanto*, or for so much) the other citizens, of the burdens of taxation? But let it be supposed that all things are so far equal, how is it in the next stage of the transaction? The remainder of the proprietary estate, to wit, the purchase money due and the interest of it, is taken into the hands of the commonwealth! 500,000l. by the computation of the proprietary agent, 300,000l. by the computation of the comptroller general---near 100,000l. of this (at least 84,000l. and some odds) is paid by the patenting of lands into the treasury of the state since the opening of the office in 1781. Why is not the whole paid? Is the time elapsed within which patents were to be taken out and payment made, or was any time limited? Certainly, and the time has been prolonged from period † to period, in accommodation to the scarcity of money with the holders of these rights. Does the state now mean to exact the sum due? No, she proposes still longer time. Four years are proposed, within which by instalments the whole may be paid: a bill is published with this provision and now lies on the table. What do the holders of these rights demand? That certificates be received in payment of purchase money. Is the purchase money due *bona fide* in specie value? Most certainly, full consideration has been received: the soil they cultivate. Are these certificates of specie value? Nominally so; the state is bound to consider them of specie value. Why not then receive them in payment of purchase money? because the state is not able at this moment to receive certificates in discharge of all debts. The certificates are the notes of the state, but she cannot afford to take them up at once.

The certificates are the notes of the state. Let us consider the class of each.

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* By the petitions sent down; by letters from individuals; by persons in Philadelphia from the county, and by the declaration of my colleague Mr. Barr, who had been at home during the recess; for as to Findley it is a long time since I ceased to have had the honor of any conversation with him.

† Purchase money was from 5l. sterling to 15l. 10s. currency, per 100 acres; so that some gain more than others by being allowed to pay in certificates.

* Quit rents 1d sterling per acre, and in some instances more. This is given up, and the non jurors and the wealthier part in the old counties of Chester, Lancaster, Bucks, and Berks, &c. have received the principal part of the advantage. If this had been collected into the treasury it would have greatly eased our public burdens.

† Laws repeatedly passed declaring how this debt shall be paid. See edition of the laws, folio page 462, section 7th, 469, section 6th, act April 5th, 1782, January 31st. 1783. Resolves 22d Dec. 1785. These several acts declaratory how these arrears shall be paid. Indulgencies granted in point of time, &c. &c. Those who paid in obedience to these acts and put faith in them, are to suffer because others who did not place confidence are now to pay with one-third, or one-fourth, or one-fifth of the value. This tends to destroy all confidence in government, laws, &c. Many of the disaffected still withhold and will not pay: It is the poorer sort, below, generally who have paid. See comptroller's notes, article 7th.

First, There are certificates issued by the state on her own original contracts in the course of the war: the amount of these by the statement of the comptroller general, is 226,822l. 7s. 9d.

Second, The certificates issued to the officers and soldiers of the Pennsylvania line, amounting to the sum of 627,585l. 11s. 4d.

Lastly, The certificates comprehended under what is called the funding law. With respect to the first, the certificates issued by the state on her own contracts, it was doubtless in the view of both parties, the state and the receiver of the certificates at the time of issuing, that the debt was due and to be paid presently. With respect to the second, the certificates issued to the troops of the Pennsylvania line, called depreciation certificates: they were issued under these circumstances, to wit, pay was due to each of these from the United States and made in the depreciated medium of the continental currency. It was the bounty of the state to make up the deficiency, but she was not obliged to do it: nevertheless she did right in so doing. Though she was not under obligation strictly legal, yet it may be stiled an act of justice, and binding morally upon the state: but on the issuing these certificates it was not understood by the state or expected by the party that the principal was to be paid presently. The payment of the interest was secured, but it could be implied only that the principal would be redeemed when the revenues of the state could afford it.

With respect to the third class, those comprehended under the funding law: these have issued to those to whom the United States have been indebted. By this law all certificates are comprehended for debts due from the United States to the citizens of this state, or those resident within this state at the time of issuing the certificates: this amounts to at least 1,500,000l. certificates for this sum are in circulation, and on the faith of the state redeemable: yet when the state assumed this debt, it could not have been understood that she bound herself to pay the principal presently: on the face of the certificates, or by the law, it is expressed that these are redeemable within ten years. It is sufficient if the state in the mean time pays the interest. But these certificates are all placed on the same foundation, equally draw interest and are redeemable without difference. By the bill it is proposed to receive all certificates equally in the payment of the purchase money.

Are our revenues sufficient to discharge more than the annual interest of our debt? They are not. We have not at this moment a shilling in the treasury for any public use or improvement in the commonwealth, the laying out or repairing roads, or forming a communication by our rivers with the western country. One applies to us and offers to survey, and make a map of the communication with the western country between the Susquehanna and the Alleghany rivers, that the channel of commerce may be delineated. There is no money in the treasury. Another proposes to explore the communication between the Schuylkill and Susquehanna rivers. There is no money in the treasury. A bill the other day was introduced to lay out and keep in repair forever, a highway (with others) from this city to Pittsburgh---It was thrown out, there was no money in the treasury! In this situation of affairs shall we begin to discharge any part of our principal.

It is true, had we only the state debt or her own contracts and the depreciation debt, we might, by our present revenues, discharge the interest and begin to reduce the principal; but the vast debt assumed by the funding law has placed the idea wholly out of view for the present. With respect to this law, I have to say that by it we have increased the debt of the state by assuming to pay more on behalf of the United States than was our quota of the continental debts, that is supposed to be about an eighth, we have assumed a fourth. Thus we have not anticipated credit; we have ancipated debt: we have assumed to pay more than will be due for many years; however we will have credit on the books of Congress, and it is only assuming to pay an hundred pounds where we owe fifty, because, though we do not owe it now, we may owe it; but by being obliged to pay the interest of so great an amount, we are unable to pay any part of the principal.

This was the mischief of the funding law, let the supporters of it say what they will in its favor. But now that law does exist, I am of all men the farthest from any attempt to destroy it, that is to adopt such measures as will lead to a repeal of it. The state having once assumed this debt, ought, in my opinion, to struggle with it until she can discharge it.

How shall she accomplish this? The revenues of the state are barely sufficient to discharge the interest of the debt and at the same time to support the annual expences of the domestic government, expences of the federal government and the debt on the foreign loans.

Since the year 1781, at an average the sum arising from this fund (the purchase money due on lands) is rated at about 12,000l. annually: take away this fund from the payment of interest on the whole debt, and apply it towards the payment of the principal, and part of the interest must remain unpaid.

By this law the patentee of lands offers his certificates, the receiving this is a payment of the whole by the state. This certificate holder then receives the whole of the demand though he did not originally expect it, while those who remain and have not lands to patent receive only interest on the whole: nay they cannot receive interest on the whole, from the alieniation of this fund ---the defect if made up must be by taxation. Will this be expedient, will it be tolerated by the people? The people will not bear more taxation. The machine is sufficiently wound up, the cord will break if drawn to a greater length. The dissatisfaction in York county shews this: let it go one degree farther and there is reason to believe the people will revolt from the pressure. They will begin to question the very foundation of the debt. Certificate holders you have reason to apprehend the consequences of this law: you may conceive it to be to your advantage, but it will be the foundation of your loss. It may produce a more immediate demand of your notes, but in a short time it may produce the ruin of them altogether.

But on the principle of admitting purchase money to be paid in certificates, you must admit the payment of all the revenue. The excise, of which the income for the last year is 29,759 9 1, marriage and tavern licences, of which the sum is 6000l. and upwards; fines and forfeitures must be received in certificates, fees received in the loan office, tax on writs, sales by the auctioniers, militia fines, duties on imports, 120,000l. and upwards annually by direct taxation, 58,000l. and upwards. The whole revenues, amounting to the sum of at least 500,000l. must on the same principle be payable in certificates.

But more especially the arrears of taxes must be payable in these; the sum now due to the state by the statement of the comptroller-general is three hundred and thirty-four thousand pounds and upwards: I am led to believe that on some plantations in Cumberland there are fifty or sixty pounds due. Surely these will come forward and pray the privilege of paying in certificates, the precedent once set cannot be resisted; the whole revenues of the state will come into the treasury in certificates; who will take these in payment of services? where is even the member of council, or the member of assembly who will go home with a certificate? Will the judges of the supreme court take a certificate? No. Services of which the state stands in need will not be performed, the pulse of government must cease to beat, all exertion must die, credit abroad and improvement at home must sink at once.

A great and principal objection to the bill, is, that if these are allowed to pay the purchase money in such securities, all will claim the same indulgence: to use the words of the wise man, it will be like the letting in of water. The ridge of the earth confines the ocean, let one wave pass, a thousand follow, a gulph is opened, and the country inundated.

The truth is, we ought to go on to pay the interest until our revenues become more effective and we are able to begin to pay the principal: we are not yet able and we are not bound to do it. To illustrate this --A husbandman is indebted to sundry persons in account, and in order to liquidate the sum and render it transferable, he gives his notes to his several creditors: it is not expected by the parties that payment of the principal is to be made instantly---payment of the interest only; for in the mean time all the money the husbandman can spare is necessary to stock or cultivate his farm. But he owes an old or a new debt to the holder of the note, which was not taken into view at the time the note was given. Let it be set off, says the holder of the note. No, says the husbandman, do not stop it: I cannot afford it now: it will ruin me. To put the case more strongly: he sells an ox to a neighbour and demands payment. Here says his neighbour, is a note of yours which I have bought up, take this in payment. Says the husbandman, no. The person to whom I gave the note had no reason to expect immediate payment, and for this cause he has sold it to you for less than the nominal value. It is true it is nothing to me at what rate of reduction you received this note, whether at two and sixpence in the pound or more: you are now in his place with respect to the rate of payment but you must not expect more than the payment of the interest annually. If you stop or set off the payment of my ox I am ruined. The roof of my house must remain uncovered, my children unclothed and unfed, I cannot buy a plough, a coulter or a ploughshare. I cannot hire labourers, my farm must remain uncultivated, and I cannot have a crop the ensuing year, and the very means of my subsistence and my industry are taken from me.

But I have several other notes; if I allow your's all the others will come upon me, and say you have taken up the note of this neighbour and why not take up ours also?

It will be said it will raise your credit and give "a

faring to the circulation of your notes,"† It is true, I may have more credit abroad on that account for the present, but I am ruined at home, and will soon cease to have any credit at all.

When at any time we may have it in our power to begin to pay the principal of our debt, we ought to begin to pay it by inſtalment, that is, by calling in the whole and paying ten in an hundred, or an hundred in a thouſand, or as it may be in our power; the principal is then reduced equally to all, and no one has reaſon to complain.

It is acknowledged that the current value is about one third of the nominal ſum; this happens on the principle I have already maintained, to wit, that tho' theſe notes are due at the preſent time, yet they are expected to be paid only in future as the lawyers ſay, "debitum in preſenti ſolvendum in futuro." Hence it is that one third of the principal in hand is equal to the whole in expectancy; but if one third is equal to the holder of the certificates, why not to the ſtate?

Will it not be ſaid by that claſs of citizens, and they are ſuppoſed to be four fifths of the community (for land unpatented is ſuppoſed to be about one fifth.) will it not be ſaid by this claſs, you have received one third from thoſe who are indebted in purchaſe money, and why not pay with one third of the nominal value to holders of certificates? If I am not much miſtaken this law will lead to the abolition of the whole or a great part of the public debt. When all thoſe who owe to the public ſhall come in and claim the privilege of paying in certificates, and when in conſequence of this, accumulated taxes ſhall fall upon the people, the holders of certificates who remain unpaid, will have but a ſmall chance of their demand: the habit of contracting debts which this will introduce, will go thro' every channel.

The preſervation of ſyſtem is the ſafety of the faith of government: a departure from it is baneful to all who depend upon public credit. The true principle of conducting our affairs with equality is for the ſtate to pay her debt and diſtinctly to receive her dues. Were all the citizens in the ſame ſituation, then the principle of defalcation might apply to all, or if the ſtate applies it to one ſhe muſt to all. She cannot to all, and therefore ought not to any.

It is true, thoſe who are about to be injured by this law do not come forward: the patentees of land are only heard, nevertheleſs we are the guardians of thoſe ſo ſilent and ought to provide for them.

It will be ſaid, if we do not take certificates, in many caſes we ſhall loſe the debt. In my opinion, rather than ſet an example ſo pernicious, it would be better to forgive it. It will be ſaid ſome cannot pay and muſt loſe their lands: that will not be the caſe in many inſtances if any, but the maxim is, private convenience muſt give way to public good. The language of Cowley with reſpect to his miſtreſs, is the language of a patriot with reſpect to his country:

Forbid it Gods, my greateſt good ſhould be,
Weigh'd with her leaſt conveniency.

It is certain the people do not always know their own intereſt, nor do individuals know. It is the prayer of philoſophy, give us thoſe things which ſuit us, though we aſk them not, and deny us what is hurtful to us even though we aſk it.

To know what is a proper public meaſure in any ſtate requires a perfect knowledge of the whole ſyſtem of finance. The people at home know each man his own wiſhes and wants. Had they the ſame opportunity we enjoy, in our preſent ſituation, doubtleſs they would be equally informed.

It is the height of ability to diſtinguiſh clearly the intereſt of a ſtate: the ſyſtem is oftentimes complex, intricate and involved. We hear of Neckar in France, and it is well known that in the courſe of the war the Congreſs of the United States thought the appointment of a financier of ability from nature and from ſtudy highly neceſſary for the ſucceſs of our campaigns.

The maxim is, every man is greatly to be truſted in his own province or courſe of knowledge. I pay great regard to any man in a particular caſe of whoſe knowledge of the ſubject in general I have an high opinion, and therefore on the firſt agitation of this queſtion I was much moved by the arguments of a member of this houſe, ſhaken from my pre-conceived opinion, and on examination have found him right.

I could wiſh the judgment of the people whom I particularly repreſent was the ſame as mine, or mine the ſame as theirs: I ſhould then have no difficulty of acting in the preſent caſe---bound in honor and ſworn in faith to do juſtice, ſworn at that table to conſent to no law contrary to the general good. An uninformed mind preſerves a good conſcience: thoſe who comprehend not clearly, may do wrong and be guiltleſs. Citizens, I am your juryman and would wiſh to decide properly.

But I am well convinced that it is the voice of my conſtituents, though I do not know that it is their ſenſe on due information to carry this bill into effect, and I conceive myſelf bound to obey their voice: for this reaſon I could wiſh a poſtponement of the bill, that in the receſs of the houſe the caſe might be argued in converſation and in the gazettes, all things fully ſtated, and the mind of the people made up on reflection. Then I could chearfully come forth and carry into effect what ſeemed to be according to their judgment.

I am well perſuaded every member of this houſe means to do what is right. I am well perſuaded there is no ſelf intereſt with any one: Indeed my own intereſt is in favor of the meaſure, becauſe I have no certificates to riſk in the ſhock of violated faith and public credit, and I have lands to patent.

I think this meaſure fraught with dangerous conſequences, and on going home and giving the people time to contemplate the two bills which lie before us and to take their choice of them, we ſhall be juſtifiable in adopting that which they approve."

So much for my reaſons againſt the bill.

(To be continued.)

† Theſe are the words of Findley in his publication.

American Occurrences.

BALTIMORE, March 20.

The following curious circumſtance is related by Dr. Foſter: "A veſſel on its voyage from Jamaica to England had ſuffered ſo much from the ſtorms by which it had been overtaken, that it was at laſt on the point of ſinking. The crew had recourſe in all haſte to the boat. The great haſte they were in, having occaſioned them to take with them but a ſmall quantity of proviſions and liquor, they ſoon began to be afflicted with hunger as well as thirſt, in a high degree, when the captain adviſed them by no means to drink the ſea water, as the effects of it would be extremely noxious; but rather to follow his example, and, thinly clad, to dip in the ſea. He himſelf practiſed this conſtantly, and not only he, but all thoſe who followed his example, found, that when they came out of the water, both their hunger and thirſt were perfectly appeaſed for a long time. Many of the crew laughed at him, and at thoſe who followed his inſtructions, but at length they grew weak, exhauſted, and died of hunger and thirſt: nay, ſome of them, urged by deſpair, threw themſelves into the ſea; but the captain, and ſuch as ſeveral times a day dipped in the ſea, preſerved their lives for the ſpace of nineteen days, and at the end of that period were taken up by a veſſel which was ſailing that way. It ſhould ſeem that they abſorbed, by the pores of their bodies, as much pure water as was ſufficient for their nouriſhment, all the ſalt being at the ſame time left behind. In fact the ſalt was depoſited on the exterior ſurface of their bodies in the form of a thin pellicle, which they were obliged repeatedly to rub off."

NEW-YORK, March 1.

I heartily rejoice, ſays a correſpondent, that this ſtate is in a fair way of diſcharging the accurſed crime of extortion. There are at this time, he ſays, a number of ſuits, to a very conſiderable amount, already commenced and commencing. Several are charged with extorting ſeven per cent. per month! Settle your accounts honorably ye extortioners! leſt ye meet with avenging juſtice, in your mad career, and your natural colours be expoſed at the public diſcipline poſt.

A petition from "the officers of the counties of Worceſter, Hampſhire, Middleſex, and Berkſhire," ſigned, "Francis Stone, chairman of the committee from the above counties," has been preſented to the ſenate and houſe of repreſentatives of Maſſachuſetts, praying for a general pardon, and ſolemnly promiſing that they will repair to their reſpective homes in a quiet and peaceable manner. In a committee of both houſes, it was reſolved not to grant the prayer of their petition: which determination was approved of by his excellency governor Bowdoin.

PHILADELPHIA, March 30.

Extract from the travels of the marquis de Chatelleux, in North-America---"I cannot here avoid relating with pleaſure, the manner which one Bell, a ſhrewd Scotch bookſeller and auctioneer of Philadelphia, paid his bills in travelling through the country. I had given him an Iriſh copy of Sheridan's School for Scandal, with the prologue and epilogue, taken from Dodſley's annual regiſter, which he reprinted and ſold for a dollar. In travelling through Virginia, ſome months after. I was ſurpriſed to ſee in many of the inns, even in the moſt remote parts of the country, this celebrated comedy; and, upon enquiry, found that Mr. Bell, who travelled with his family in a covered cart, had paſſed in his way to the ſprings, (the Harrowgate or Maltock of America) and ſucceſsfully circulated in payment this new ſpecies of paper currency; for, as he obſerved, "Who would not prefer Sheridan's ſterling, to the counterfeit creations of Congreſs, or even of R---- M----. Not was any depreciation attempted where the intrinſic value was ſo unequivocally ſtamped with the character of wit and freedom."

A large and commercial city, ſays a correſpondent, is favorable to liberty, and therefore moſt proper for the ſeat of a free gonernment. Monarch and tyrants alone fly from large cities to country towns. Verſailles, Potſdam and the Hague have been found faſer places for eſtabliſhing and ſpreading arbitrary power, than Paris, Berlin or Amſterdam.

Pittſburgh, April 21.

Extract of a letter from Danville, (Kentucky) dated February 22.

"A party of men who lately went againſt the Checkamawgway Indian towns have returned: forty miles from the towns they fell in with a camp, at which there were fifteen Indians, eight of whom they killed, the remaining ſeven eſcaping towards the towns."

To avoid the oppreſſion of taxes, and the severities of unjuſt govetnment, the United States declared themſelves independent, and in conſequence thereof, ſubjected themſelves to numerous evils: whilſt ſtill ſmarting under the inconveniencies of a moſt hazardous and ſevere conflict, we ſee one of the principal of theſe ſtates plunged into all the miſeries of a civil war, and their land ſtained with fraternal blood. The moſt diſcerning citizens are of opinion, that this anarchy owes its origin to the preſſure of taxes, to cauſes ſomewhat ſimilar to thoſe that brought about the revolution. The feelings, the abilities, the diſpoſitions of the people ſhould always be attended to: for though little deſpots may affect to think lightly of them, yet when once they are rouſed, they frequently ſhake to the foundations, the moſt ancient and beſt eſtabliſhed governments. Notwithſtanking general Lincoln had diſbanded his army, and it was expected that peace and tranquility would ſucceed, we find the inſurgents ſtill menacing, and determined; ſo true it is, what the wiſe monarch once obſerved, that a brother offended, is harder to be won than a ſtrong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a caſtle.

A late foreign newſpaper mentions that the reigning Margrave of Baden, in Germany, had recently cauſed in his territories, a monument in honor of a Farmer who had drained a marſh, and turned it into good paſture ground. This monument, it is juſtly obſerved, will do the prince infinitely more honor, than if he had raiſed a trophy to commemorate the ſlaughter of ten thouſand fellow creatures that had fallen in battle.

TO BE LET,

And entered on immediately, for ſuch a term as may be agreed on.

PART of that excellent and well improved plantation, known by the name of DIRTY CAMP, lying on the Pennſylvania road, about fourteen miles from the town of Pittſburgh, containing, by eſtimation, about 90 acres of well cleared land, and under good fence, 40 acres of which are fine meadow and paſture, greateſt part of which may be watered: the tillage lands are deep and very fine for corn, or other grain. Any ſober induſtrious perſon inclined to rent the above land, may apply to

SAMUEL M'KAY.

Pittſburgh, April 19.

N. B. Any perſons inclined to make a ſettlement on unimproved lands, but eaſily cleared, will meet with great encouragement by applying as above.

FOR SALE, BY

ROBERT BROWN,

At the houſe of Mr. James Chambers, in Pittſburgh:

A General aſſortment of pot metal and iron; alſo a quantity of dry goods, rum, wine, and ſalt, which will be ſold on the loweſt terms for caſh or country produce.

N. B. Ginſeng wanted, for which half will be given in caſh and the other half in goods.

WHEREAS ſome evil deſigning perſon or perſons have propagated reports injurious to the characters of the ſubſcriber and his family, he now calls on any ſuch perſon or perſons to come forward and ſupport any charges which they may lay againſt them, as they are ready at any time to have their characters enquired into. But hereafter ſhould any perſon or perſons dare to aſſert any thing injurious to their characters, he will proſecuted him or them to the utmoſt rigor of the law.

FRANCIS M'ELWAINE.

April 20, 1787.

N. B. It is hoped the public will not credit any reports they may hear, as it is only done through envy and malice.

Juſt opened and to be ſold by the ſubſcriber living on the bank of the river, between Mr. David Duncan's and Mr. John Ormſby's.

A LARGE *and general aſſortment of* DRY *and* WET GOODS, *which he will diſpoſe of on the moſt reaſonable terms for caſh, country produce, peltry or ginſeng.*

JOHN GIBSON.

POST-OFFICE,

Philadelphia, March 2, 1787.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, THAT in conſequence of a contract entered into for that purpoſe, there will ſhortly be a regular communication by poſt, between the town of Alexandria, in Virginia, and Pittſburg, in this ſtate, by the route of New-Gate, Leeſburgh, Winchester, Fort Cumberland, and Bedford. The mail will be carried weekly from May 1ſt to November 1ſt: and once a fortnight the remainder of the year. This eſtabliſhment will take place, as ſoon as the neceſſary arrangements can be made.

If any perſon inclines to form a more direct communication between this city and Fort-Pitt, by carrying a mail regularly from this office to Bedford, ſo as to tally with the Virginia poſt, that route may now be contracted for upon advantageous terms---as the excluſive privilege of carrying letters and packets for hire, between this city and Bedford, and all the emoluments ariſing therefrom, will be granted for any term, not exceeding ſeven years, to any perſon undertaking the buſineſs at his own expence, and giving ſatisfactory ſecurity for performance.

Section 4. AND whereas upwards of five years have elapſed ſince this ſtate undertook to compenſate the officers and ſoldiers of the Pennſylvania line of the late army of the United States of America, for the loſſes ſuſtained by the ſame officers and ſoldiers ſeverally, by receiving their pay in depreciated bills of credit; and whereas divers of the ſaid officers and ſoldiers who were intitled to the relief intended for them have not applied in perſon, nor by their agents or attornies in fact, executors or adminiſtrators, to aſk, demand or take out the certificates for the depreciation aforeſaid, which were directed by an act of general aſſembly, enacted for that purpoſe on the eighteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thouſand ſeven hundred and eighty, intitled, "An act to ſettle and adjuſt the accounts of the troops of this ſtate, in the ſervice of the United States, and for other purpoſes therein mentioned." And whereas many abuſes have been attempted and practiſed by perſons not of kin to the deceaſed ſoldiers, nor having demands upon their eſtates; taking out letters of adminiſtration, and by ſetting up falſe and fraudulent claims to certificates for depreciation, which remained uniſſued; and it is proper that the certificates aforeſaid, which yet remain in the hands of the comptroller general of this ſtate, and all other certificates for depreciation, which have not hitherto been demanded by the perſons reſpectively who are or were intitled to them, ſhould be ſecure from further abuſe, and likewiſe that ſome limitation ſhould be given to the iſſuing of certificates for depreciation.

Sect 5. Be it therefore enacted by the authority aforeſaid, That from and after the publication of this act, none of the certificates which have been made out for compenſating the loſſes of the officers and ſoldiers aforeſaid, by receiving depreciated bills of credit, nor any other certificates of the like nature, which have been made out, or which have been directed to be made out, to any perſon or perſons in the pay of the United States of America, or of this ſtate uniſſued, or which be not yet made out, ſhall be delivered to any perſon, other than the perſon who is intitled to the ſame, or to his attorney in fact, properly authoriſed by letter of attorney, duly executed and recorded in the office for recording of deeds in the county of Philadelphia, or to his executor or executors, or to his adminiſtrator or adminiſtrators, legally intitled to the ſame or a ſhare thereof, by ſucceſſion ab inteſtato: and that all the depreciation certificates aforeſaid, of whatever nature or kind, which from and after the firſt day of April, which will be in the year of our Lord one thouſand ſeven hundred and eighty ſeven, ſhall remain unclaimed and not taken out, ſhall be deemed and conſidered as eſcheats to the commonwealth, in the like manner and to the like effect, as if the ſeveral perſons who are or were intitled to the ſame certificates were dead without kindred.

The foregoing is an extract from a law of this ſtate, paſſed the 25th day of March 1786, which is thus publiſhed for the more general information of all concerned.

JOHN NICHOLSON.

Comptroller-general's office, Phila. Jan. 31, 1787.

AN OFFICE

For the Purchaſe and Sale of the various kinds of Continental and State Certificates. Alſo Houſes, Lots and Lands, by

MATTHEW M'CONNEL,

ON the eaſt ſide of Second ſtreet, between Market and Cheſnut ſtreets, ſeven doors below Black Horſe-alley, Philadelphia. Who furniſhes Certificates for the Land Office, and will carry the warrants through, clear of any commiſſion.

All applications and orders from perſons reſiding in any part of this, or of the United States, will be punctually attended to; whether to make purchaſes or ſales, payments in the land office, or to receive intereſt at the continental loan office or ſtate treaſury.

CERTIFICATES for the LAND OFFICE

MAY *be had of the ſubſcriber, at his office on the north ſide of Market-ſtreet, two doors below Fourth ſtreet and directly oppoſite that part of the market lately built, where every perſon applying may be furniſhed with the exact ſum they may have occaſion for in the land-office, and their warrants carried through without any other charge than the fees of the different offices, by*

THOMAS FORREST.

Who buys and ſells all kinds of CERTIFICATES of this ſtate, or any of the United States.

Philadelphia, Sept. 2, 1786.

The Famous HORSE

EXPERIMENT,

WILL cover this ſeaſon, at the ſtable of the ſubſcriber living in Pittſburgh, at the low rate of ſix dollars the ſeaſon; three dollars the ſingle leap: and two buſhels of oats: or twelve dollars for enſuring a colt.

Experiment was bred by Col. William Churchill, in Middleſex, old Virginia; his ſire King Herod, who was got by old Fearnought, out of the high bred imported mare Kitty Fiſher; his dam by Othello; his grand dam by Childers; his great grand dam by the imported horſe Dancing-Maſter.

THOMAS PARKER.

N. B. Good paſture may be had convenient and reaſonable.

The Famous HORSE

DOVE,

WILL cover this ſeaſon at the ſtable of the ſubſcriber, living in Pittſburgh, at the low rate of Four Dollars and one buſhel of oats, or Two Dollars the ſingle leap; the ſeaſon continues until the laſt of June.

Dove was got by Old Dove, out of the Wildair Mare, which were imported in one ſhip. It is needleſs to give a genealogy of his being full blooded, or half or quarter blooded; but his figure and breed are much eſteemed in the parts from whence he was brought, where he got many colts, which, it is allowed, will be equal to himſelf, and his dropping colts will ſhew more at large, as he covered here laſt year.

DANIEL BRITT & CO.

Have for Sale, a General Aſſortment of

MERCHANDIZE,

WHICH will be Sold on reaſonable Terms for Caſh, Flour, Whiſky, Beef, Pork, Bacon, Wheat, Rye, Oats, Corn, Aſhes, Candlewick, allow, &c &c.

Pittſburgh, July 28.

DANIEL BRITT & Co. once more call on thoſe indebted to the late houſe of Craig, Bayard & Co. to come and ſettle their accounts, as they need not expect any further lenity.

Pittſburgh, Dec. 20, 1786.

WHEREAS Mr. Iſaac Craig of this place, pretended to have a title to a lot No. 256, on the corner of Short ſtreet, and now in my poſſeſſion; and as the ſaid Iſaac Craig may perhaps ſell to ſome perſon ignorant of my claim, I hereby inform the public that I conceive myſelf to have the beſt title to the ſaid lot, and that I ſhall hold it until I am put out by courſe of law.

DAVID DUNCAN.

Pittſburgh, March 8, 1787.

JUST opening at the Store of the ſubſcriber in Pittſburgh, a complete cargo of W[illegible] Goods, of the firſt quality, and other Groce[illegible] which will be ſhortly added, a general aſſortme[illegible] Dry Goods, as uſual, all which will be ſold on moſt reaſonable terms for caſh, or any kind of country produce, at market price.

James O'Hara.

January 24, 1787.

THE ſubſcriber wiſhing to finiſh the buſineſs of JAMES O'HARA & Co. requeſts that all perſons indebted to that firm, will make the neceſſary payments before the firſt day of May next, as his ſituation obliges him to put every open account belonging to the company, on that day, into the hands of their attorney. He hopes that his friends and cuſtomers will acknowledge the diſtant period fixed upon for payment, ſufficiently generous, and that they will leave him no cauſe to exclaim or put them to any further trouble. Country produce of all kinds will be received at market prices: all thoſe who have any demands, are informed that the neceſſary arrangement is made for making immediate payment of all the charges that may be brought againſt them.

James O'Hara.

Pittſburgh, January 24, 1787.

THE Partnerſhip of John & Daniel Craig being this day diſſolved, I hereby inform all perſons not to credit ſaid Daniel on my account, as I am reſolved to pay no contracts of ſaid Daniel's after this date.

JOHN CRAIG.

Pittſburg, February 24, 1787.

N. B. The hatter's buſineſs will ſtill be carried on with more ſpeed and regularity than ever, as there will be more attention paid to it.

Weſtmoreland County, Hempfield Townſhip, April 3, 1787.

THIS is to give notice to all perſons, that John Meyer has received from me, four notes: one for ten pounds, due laſt October; the ſecond note is alſo for ten pounds, and due in the ſucceeding October; the third note is thirteen pounds is due in the year 1788, in October; and fourth note is Twelve pounds, due in the year 1789, in October; and I do hereby forewarn all perſons not to buy the ſaid notes of John Meyer, or take any aſſignment of him as I am determined not pay the ſaid notes without I am compelled by law.

PHILLIP KOLP.

N. B The above John Meyer has ſold me a tract of land and he cannot make me a good right to it, according to contract.

WHEREAS a certain Peter Berikman did obtain a bond from the ſubſcriber, dated in the month of November, 1784, and reads payable the 1ſt of November 1787, it being in part pay for a tract of land the ſubſcriber bought of ſaid Berikman: I do hereby forwarn any perſon from taking an aſſignment of ſaid bond, as there is a conſiderable quantity of the land ſold to me which I cannot obtain, and I do not intend paying for any more than I hold, without I am compelled by law.

ALEXANDER M'CLURE.

April 7, 1787.

CLAIMS againſt the UNITED STATES.

Office of accounts, Marine Department, New-York January 1, 1787.

ALL perſons having claims againſt the United States, for ſervices performed, or articles ſupplied, in the Marine Department, are hereby notified, that unleſs their accounts are ſpeedily ſent to this office, they will be precluded from any ſettlement as a day will ſhortly be fixed, after which no claims will be received.

BENJAMIN WALKER, Commiſſioner.

The ſeveral printers throughout the United States are requeſted to inſert the above in their papers.

Spelling Books,

By the dozen or ſingle one, may be had at the printing-office.

PITTSBURGH: *Printed and Sold by* JOHN SCULL and JOHN BOYD, *at their Printing-Office in Water-ſtreet, near the Ferry. where* Subſcriptions (at [illegible] ann.) Advertiſements, *&c. for this Paper, are thankfully received, and* PRINTING *in its different Branches is done with Care, Elegance, and Expedition.* ADVERTISEMENTS not exceeding a Square are Inſerted Three Weeks for a Dollar, and every continuance after one-fourth of a Dollar; thoſe exceeding a ſquare are inſerted in proportion.